



CENTRE FOR
HUMANITARIAN
LEADERSHIP

Leading the Way

Applied Humanitarian Leadership Learning in the Haiyan Response

Dr Phil Connors and Sophie Perreard

December 2014





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Research conducted by
Dr Phil Connors and Sophie Perreard
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Faculty of Arts and Education
Deakin University



“We are really seriously doing something about what the sector needs in that regard. We've got a lot of management training out there, an awful lot of how do you get through the daily tasks. But not an awful lot about what it means to be something slightly different. We've got a lot of doers out there but not a lot of people who can really take this stuff on (leadership) and want to take it on and feel comfortable doing that with the necessary sort of support and encouragement. So really hope the HLP can continue and other people can benefit from it”.

GCHL/HLP Graduate Student – Manila, January 2014

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¹ This paper will refer to DFAT as this is the current name of the department, however at the time of course inception the department was called AusAID.

Executive Summary

A unique partnership was born the day that Stephen McDonald from Save the Children walked through the doors of Deakin University to share his ideas on leadership training in the humanitarian sector with Dr Phil Connors from the MICD program in 2011. In the intervening period this partnership has expanded its global reach to include other actors in the humanitarian sector and has resulted in the development of the GCHL/HLP. Over three years this course has proved enormously popular with over 1000 applicants, some 120 graduates and currently has over 200 participants worldwide. The course utilises a combination of cloud based and intensive located learning pedagogies to provide world leading education.

The research was commissioned to ascertain the effectiveness of the applied learning for graduates and current students involved in leadership roles in the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda that devastated central Philippines in November 2013.

The findings from the research indicate that the structure and content of the course is relevant and very effective in building the self-awareness, self-confidence, resilience, reflective practice, strategic thinking and relational leadership skills of graduates and current students. All informants indicated the course had assisted them to become better leaders within their organisation's response.

The research also identified limitations in the current structure. The course is restricted in its reach because it can only accept limited numbers in each iteration due to the nature of the intensive located learning units. Currently the programme is run once a year, due to budget and staffing restrictions, and is taught in English, limiting its impact and reducing access for potential non-English speaking students. There are plans to expand delivery through partnerships with other educational institutions, humanitarian organisations and private sector partners. Discussions are currently underway with the University of Indonesia, University of Nairobi and the Asia Institute of Management in Manila. It is also planned to have the course available to be taught in Bahasa Indonesia and other languages as part of this process. Negotiations for a Francophone version are also underway. A wider reach can only benefit the sector as a whole.

To realise the transformation of the sector through a focus on leadership, as indicated in the multitude of reports on the subject over the last decade, it is important that scale is achieved. What this report identifies is that the course and process has significant impact on

the leadership capabilities of graduates. Expansion of the course into other regions and languages will make it more accessible to a greater variety of humanitarian actors. Essential to the process is maintaining the pedagogical integrity of the course while contextualising the content to suit the focus and diversity of the region in which it is being delivered. By making the course available across regions achieves the outcome of building local capacity to be able to lead responses to complex disasters. The benefits of this would enhance the necessary transformation of the sector making it more sustainable and more proficient in coping with the increasing demands being placed upon it.

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Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ADRRN	Asia Disaster reduction and Response Network
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AusAID	Australian Aid
BHPT	Building High Performing Teams
C&T	Change and Transformation
CVSP	Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DR	Deliver Results
GCHL	Graduate Certificate of Humanitarian Leadership
GLO	Global Learning Outcome
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HLP	Humanitarian Leadership Programme
MC	Managerial Courage
MHA	Master of Humanitarian Assistance
MICD	Master of Community Development
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
SHSS	School of Humanities and Social Sciences
ST	Strategic Thinking
ULO	Unit Learning Outcome

Note: Both HLP and GCHL are used in this paper. HLP refers to the programme itself and GCHL is the academic denomination for the course

Introduction

This paper presents the findings and analysis from a research project that was designed to ascertain the efficacy of learning for graduates of the Graduate Certificate of Humanitarian Leadership/Humanitarian Leadership Programme (GCHL/HLP) set up through a partnership between Save the Children Australia and Deakin University. The course was designed to build the capacity of leaders in the humanitarian sector with a view to improve the overall effectiveness of humanitarian responses. Commencing in 2012 the course is a combination of cloud-based learning and intensive located learning units designed to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of participants. This is achieved through a process of fully scaffolded work-integrated learning that combines the practice wisdom of experienced humanitarian practitioners with the rigour and focus of university education.

There is an intense focus on leadership across the board in the public sector and private enterprise and in broader culture. There has been a similar focus in the humanitarian sector, primarily concentrating on the importance of leadership in the effective and efficient delivery of responses in often highly complex situations (ELRAH 2010; Hoschschild 2010; AusAID 2011; DFID 2011; ALNAP 2012; ALNAP 2013; HFP Undated; Knox Clarke 2014). The critical role of leadership in humanitarian responses has taken on particular emphasis following the challenges experienced in Haiti and Pakistan in 2010. In the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, the United Nations identified enhanced leadership and coordination in complex humanitarian responses as a priority. The perceived limitations of the humanitarian responses in Haiti and Pakistan encouraged a review with the need for strengthened leadership in the sector again cited as an urgent requirement (ALNAP 2012).

Leadership literature focussed on the humanitarian sector has been divided between analysis of the broader leadership and coordination roles undertaken by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) in conjunction with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) (Hoschschild 2012; IASC 2012), and operational leadership (ELRHA 2010; ALNAP 2012; Featherstone 2012; Knox Clarke 2014). A common thread in the literature is the understanding that the notion of the 'heroic' individual leader is not as important or significant in the humanitarian sector as it may be in other contexts. What is more applicable is the distributed or empowered notion where leadership is widely disseminated though a leadership team or even more broadly with devolution of decision making and delegation of power to the lowest possible decision-making level applicable, an organisational equivalent of the principle of subsidiarity. However, this does not mean that the role of leader is not important. As Knox Clarke (2014)

indicates, the leader is important, especially when making the final decision in situations where there may be limited information available but action needs to be taken. The other important role of the designated leader is in building systems and structures that provide organisational guidance for the rest of the team (Knox Clarke 2014).

While there is a focus on this more devolved and empowering leadership style in the humanitarian sector, there has been a strong call for a greater level of strategic thinking in relation to both coordination and operational leadership. Another theme explores behaviours that make effective or 'good' leadership. There is some consensus around areas such as strategic thinking as mentioned above, however there are also discussions around team building; strong organisational understanding; the capacity to make decisions from limited and often incomplete information; ability to communicate a vision and purpose; the resilience to accommodate situations that are constantly changing and of course, key to any leadership role, the ability to deliver results.

Such discussion of behaviours tends to focus on the capacity building of individuals that is perceived to be necessary but not sufficient (Knox Clarke 2014) in the overall leadership analysis. Another key aspect is the organisational structures within which individuals and teams work. The importance of building organisational structures and processes that enable leaders and leadership teams to feel supported cannot be underestimated. Leadership does not happen in a vacuum and in a response when at times the situation can feel particularly chaotic it is infinitely reassuring to know that, as a leader, your organisation is prepared to support your decisions and have the necessary processes in place to maximise the possibility of positive outcomes.

1 Objectives of the Programme

- To provide humanitarian professionals with an intensive, challenging and richly rewarding personal development experience that gives them the capability and confidence to lead humanitarian operations;
- To make a significant contribution towards the professionalisation of the sector;
- To improve the quality of leadership offered by humanitarian organisations and others in the sector responding to humanitarian disasters from disaster risk reduction to managing major responses and leading the transition to long-term recovery and development;
- To develop a multi-agency and multinational cohort of humanitarian leaders who have shared a common learning experience and are committed and able to improve humanitarian operations across the region;
- To create a collaborative approach to learning across agencies throughout the Asia-Pacific region that directly impacts how we work together to achieve our goals.

2 Why this research?

The GCHL/HLP evolved in response to the leadership discussions in the sector as part of the broader professionalization agenda. Feedback from students and graduates indicated that the course had assisted them in building more confidence in their leadership abilities. This in itself is important, however as the course is focused primarily on leadership in operational contexts the true test of the value of the course could only really be ascertained when graduates and current students were physically engaged in a response setting. Super Typhoon Haiyan provided such a context.

The research was undertaken following the first phase and at the beginning of the second phase of response to Typhoon Haiyan. Typhoon Haiyan, known as Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines, was a Category 5, super typhoon that struck the Philippines in November 2013. The City of Tacloban in Eastern Visayas was hardest hit with thousands being killed and extensive damage to buildings and other infrastructure. Typhoon Haiyan cut a swathe of destruction across the central Philippines and on to Vietnam.

The Haiyan response was the first Level 3² response since the commencement of the GCHL/HLP and provided an ideal opportunity to undertake research with graduates from the course. The aim was to ascertain graduates' perceptions of how the learning from the course may have influenced their decision-making in the roles they undertook in their organisations during the initial stages of the Haiyan response. Overall there were more than 30 graduates and current students from the course, working in seven organisations, involved in the first or second phases of the response. The research participants were all working in roles that required some measure of leadership, from Response Leaders to Sector Specialist roles and Logistics Managers, Regional Advisors and providing backstop support from HQs, etc.

3 Background to the Course

The GCHL/HLP had its gestation following the decision by Save the Children Australia (Save) using capacity building funds received from (the then) AusAID for the development of a Humanitarian Leadership Programme. The idea was to identify a potential partner university and jointly build a course that met the expressed needs of the sector. The key design premise of the proposed programme was that it would be 'by practitioners, for practitioners' supported by academic rigour provided by the partner university. It was never intended that the course would or should be a wholly academic process as the practice component of humanitarian leadership was not something that lends itself to purely academic learning. Additionally, it was recognised that for such a course to have credence beyond one agency or group of agencies, it was required to have a university partner who could build in the academic rigour and provide a recognised qualification that was transportable for graduates and would be acknowledged across different geographic and organisational contexts.

The original idea for such a course came out of internal Save the Children discussions in late 2010. This was around the start of the current focus on the role of leadership in the humanitarian sector. The conversations identified a gap in the provision of leadership programmes in the humanitarian sector. While there was a growing number of internal and

² Refers to the United Nations system of disaster categorisation. L3 is the highest response categorization.

at times cross-organisational training programmes focussed on building the leadership capacity of individuals within the organisations and ultimately the broader sector, it was recognised that there was the need for a high quality programme that targeted the needs of senior managers and leaders in the sector and that such a programme would be best provided in partnership with academia. Contextualised learning was a key goal of the proposed course. Withdrawing participants from their work places for significant periods of time was not amenable to the needs of the sector and did not encourage the development of leadership in practice. It was perceived early on that quality distance learning that made the most of available technology would be important in achieving the outcomes of the course.

In 2011, Stephen McDonald, Head of Humanitarian Operations at Save the Children Australia held preliminary discussions with the Professor Matthew Clarke, Head of School, Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) at Deakin University. Since its inception in the 1970s Deakin has been focused on the provision of world-class distance education. Over time this has shifted towards Cloud-Based learning designed to provide students with high quality learning opportunities wherever they are located around the globe. Deakin has also developed a strong reputation of being an innovative and forward-thinking university that is prepared to explore new opportunities and a willingness to partner with other organisations to develop high quality courses that meet the needs of specific groups, in this case the humanitarian sector (Eg: Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Humanitarian Responses to 21st Century Disasters, winner of the higher education E-learning Industry Award and Wharton/QS Oceania Award for 2104. The content for the MOOC is based on the first unit of the GCHL/HLP). The School of Humanities and Social Sciences was already home to Australia's largest post-graduate development studies course, the Master of International and Community Development (MICD) and was actively exploring the possibility of developing a complementary programme, the Master of Humanitarian Assistance (MHA). Further discussions were then held with Dr Phil Connors, Course Director of the MICD, who was also responsible for the scoping study for the MHA. From this the GCHL/HLP was scoped, planned and developed with the first group of participants commencing their studies in January 2012.

Overall there has been in excess of 200 students from over 35 organisations and 45 countries involved across the four years, with approximately 110 graduates from the first three iterations of the course. A fourth cohort has just commenced their studies.

4 Partnership Approach

The partnership approach to the course development extended to include other humanitarian organisations. For the course to be considered viable and for it to be useful across the sector it was necessary for it to receive buy-in from a broad range of stakeholders. To this end World Vision Australia, Oxfam Australia, Care and Plan were included in the discussions and planning right from the start. Combined with Save the Children Australia, DFAT and Deakin University these organisations formed the nucleus of the partnership that supports the course. Agency staff members are involved in the preparation, teaching and assessment of the course although the final decision on academic matters always remains with the university. Since its inception other organisations have become involved with the Asia Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN is an umbrella group of 34 organisations in the South and South East Asian regions), RedR Australia, Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG), Action Contre La Faim (ACF) and UNICEF also joining the partnership. There is increasing interest from potential corporate partners also with Peter Berry Consulting and the Nous Group being the first official corporate partners.

5 Course Structure and Content

The course is a Graduate Certificate that equates to Level 8 (post-graduate) in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). This is the introductory level of post-graduate education in Australia. Graduate Certificate courses consist of four units, or equivalent of one semester of full time study. It was decided that given the nature of the course and the target population it was best to couch the course at a post-graduate level. Even though not all the students have necessarily completed undergraduate degrees, the requirements for entry into the course, including having at least five years of experience in leadership roles within a relevant organisation, means that the level of qualification needs to recognise the calibre of the student cohort. The qualification can then be used as an entry point into Master's or other post graduate courses if graduates seek to continue their studies.

The course was originally designed around three modules taught across a six month period. It was envisaged that two would be intensive located learning separated by a cloud-based learning module and that the equivalent of two units could be successfully taught in the first intensive module. Following the pilot of the course in 2012 it was evident that this was

counter-productive and that a significant piece of the content would best be presented in a cloud-based unit that students undertook prior to the first intensive. This refinement was the first of a series of improvements that have taken place over the life of the course.

The settled course structure consists of four units with two cloud-based units and two intensive located learning units. For the current course structure see table 1 below. The course is taught across two teaching periods (trimesters) and takes 8 months to complete. While it is possible to undertake a Graduate Certificate in one teaching period of full time study the following reasons highlight why this is not pursued for this course.

- Students are all working in the humanitarian sector while studying and a full-time load was felt to be too demanding.
- Integration of the materials and practice is a central part of the learning process and this requires time for reflection and analysis.
- The structure of the course having a cloud-based unit followed by an intensive located learning unit provides students with a good blend of theory and practice. To undertake four units of this nature in one teaching period would be onerous on students and faculty.

Table 1 Course Structure

Teaching Period ³	Unit Code	Unit Title	Mode of Delivery
1	AHL701	The Humanitarian World	Cloud Based
	AHL702	Developing Humanitarian Leadership	Intensive Located
2	AHL 703	Leadership in the Delivery of Humanitarian Operations	Cloud Based
	AHL704	Demonstrating Strategic Leadership in Humanitarian Contexts	Intensive Located

³ Current Teaching Period 1 is from November to February and Teaching period 2 from March to June

- Students are required to integrate their learning into their work roles as much as possible and having the course across two teaching periods provides an opportunity for students to engage in this process.
- The first intensive is currently held on a Deakin University campus in Melbourne and the second is conducted in a PMI (Indonesian Red Cross) training facility in Semarang, Indonesia. As the vast majority of students do not live in either of these places it would be unreasonable to require students to plan two lots of travel in one teaching period, especially given the nature of their work.

The content of the course is innovative and engaging and brings together the best of humanitarian practitioner experience and university academic rigour. The cloud-based units engage students through CloudDeakin technologies including virtual tutorial sessions using Blackboard Collaborate. This software enables guest speakers to present and for students to engage in direct discussion with faculty and guest speakers. In this way students are exposed to different ways of thinking that may challenge or reinforce their understanding of the humanitarian sector and the role of leadership within it. There is also a lively engagement in the asynchronous on-line discussion forums on the site. In the second on-line unit the students also get introduced to the fictitious land of Lolesia through a virtual simulation. This is used as an introduction to the demographic and geopolitical information of Lolesia that is necessary for their live simulation in the second of the intensive located learning units. This is just one example of how the units are integrated and learning is scaffolded across the course.

Live simulations are used in each of the intensive located learning units. In the first intensive students undertake a 24 hour simulation and in the second intensive they are placed in a much longer simulation. Both are designed to test their ability to demonstrate the leadership behaviours, which are explained below, that underpin the learning, particularly in the intensive units.

The course also incorporates two assessment tools that are designed to assist students to gain greater self-awareness, particularly in relation to how they are perceived by others. The first of these is the Hogan psychometric assessment that includes the Hogan Motives, Values and Preferences Inventory, the Hogan Personality Inventory and the Hogan Development

Survey⁴. The combination of the three tools provides students with a statistically robust analysis of their values and drivers; how their day-to-day work-related characteristics may be perceived by others; and what potential 'derailers' they may present when they are under stress. Each student (and member of faculty) completes the three surveys prior to the first intensive located learning unit. In the intensive a group analysis and explanation of the Personality Inventory report is conducted, this is generally a very useful group exercise. Students also get more detailed feedback about their reports in their individual coaching sessions.

The second tool is the 360 degree assessment that is most often used as part of a performance planning and review process. In the course students are asked to nominate their line manager, peers inside the organisation, colleagues from other organisations they have contact with, and people who report directly to them in their usual role. As such, this report presents a snapshot of how the student is perceived by the people they work with. The 360 degree questionnaire is forwarded to all those nominated by the student. The questions in the tool are related directly to the six leadership behaviours used in the course. When completed by the nominated people the answers are collated and a report is generated and provided to the student. This report is then used as the basis of the first coaching session in the second intensive located learning unit. At this time the 360 degree report is also linked back to the Hogan reports providing students with a comprehensive analysis of how they are perceived and from this they can plan how they might address any perceived limitations while maintaining and developing their strengths.

The academic assessment processes across the course are designed to provide students with meaningful learning that is directly applicable to their work. For instance students undertake learning journals as part of the assessment for each unit. This builds across the course to provide students with an insightful personal observation of their learning journey encapsulating their growth as reflective practitioners. Team assessment is also used across a number of the units. In the cloud-based units this may take the form of producing a needs assessment or situation report on a given context. Students work in teams across time zones and organisations and have to think about how they will deal with the difficulties they are confronting in order to produce the required outcome. As part of such projects students also

⁴ Peter Berry Consulting http://www.peterberry.com.au/page/hogan_assessments.html

undertake an individual analysis of the group process so they can further enhance their ability to reflect on their own and others engagement in the means of achieving the end.

Teamwork is the central part of the assessment in both intensive located learning units. Students are required to work in teams in many different ways and with many different members across the two units. The most challenging teamwork assessments are associated with the simulation exercises. In these the students are members of teams responding to a particular scenario. They are required to produce outputs and engage in a number of activities that provide the opportunity for them to demonstrate leadership behaviours. The students are observed across the simulations by the faculty and it is these observations that form a significant part of the assessment for the intensive units. Following the simulations, teams go through a series of reflective processes designed to not only act as debriefing sessions but also to explore the learning that has taken place and identify for each person something positive they demonstrated as well as something they could improve on. In this way the students get used to giving focussed feedback that looks at both strengths and limitations of others and get to receive such feedback themselves, all important learning for people involved in leadership roles.

Coaching is another important part of the course with each student having access to an individual coach in both of the intensive located learning units. Students get to have two formal coaching sessions in each intensive and can also access their coach at any other time on an informal basis. Coaches also facilitate the group feedback sessions and provide a focal point for the observation of the leadership behaviours in simulation. At the conclusion of the course students are encouraged to identify a mentor (aside from course faculty) who can take on the role for at least eighteen months following the end of the course. This is designed to assist graduates to continue their education and reflection in order to further embed the learning from the course.

There are six leadership behaviours that are focussed on in the course. These were distilled through a focus group process from an original group of sixteen behaviours that had been identified by work undertaken by Save the Children UK. The six identified behaviours were considered to be those most applicable to senior, and more specifically strategic, leadership. The six behaviours are:

- Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose (CVSP),
- Strategic Thinking (ST),
- Managerial Courage (MC),

- Deliver Results (DR),
- Building High Performing Teams (BHPT) and
- Change and Transformation (C&T).

When exhibited in different ways, each of these behaviours can enhance leadership or limit it. To this end the observation form for students is divided into four levels,

- High Level
- Adding Value
- Awareness
- Limiting

As mentioned above it is the role of the coaches to be the primary observers of the teams during the simulation. Other faculty members will also be involved in the observation process as they play roles within the simulation that brings them into contact with students. Observers are looking to identify specific contexts that exhibit how students within the simulation demonstrate the behaviours. The aim over the course is to reduce the number of occasions where limiting behaviours are demonstrated and enhance the awareness and particularly the adding value and high level attributes as much as possible. The leadership behaviours matrix is attached as Appendix 1.

The course is referred to, in university language, as an excellent example of “fully scaffolded work-integrated learning” and is held up as an exemplar of good teaching and learning practice. The integration of sector partners provides credence for the course that would be missing if it were to be a purely university run course. On the other hand, having the university involved provides an academic rigour that can be missing in organisational training. The development of the course through the university system means that the course has been subjected to the full scrutiny of the course standards process and had to fulfil all the content and assessment requirements applicable. The university has a set of Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs) addressed as Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) that each student should be able to demonstrate on graduation and that have to be addressed in content and linked to assessment as part of their learning. In order to meet these, each course has to identify how it meets the CLOs across the units taught. In order to demonstrate this each unit of a course has Unit Learning Outcomes (ULOs) linked to two or three of the CLOs. Across a course each of the CLOs must be addressed by ULOs in at least

one unit of study. Assessment is also linked to each of the ULOs. It is this process that provides the academic rigour for the course.

6 Methodology of the research

This research followed principally qualitative methodology, utilising the following approaches: field and desk-based semi-structured interviews, online questionnaire and 360 degrees assessment. The research included 26 interviews with students and graduates, and 5 others in positions dealing directly with them. Two of the graduates were interviewed twice to examine the roles they played at different times of the response. Overall, a total of 31 people participated in the research.

Field research was conducted early January 2014, two months after Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in the Philippines. The research team travelled to Manila and Estancia, and conducted semi-structured interviews with national and international humanitarian actors involved in the emergency response. Key informants included GCHL/HLP graduates and students enrolled in the course at the time, peers and senior managers occupying leadership roles in the response. A total of 11 key informants participated in the interviews in the Philippines.

Subsequent to the field research the team conducted the remaining interviews with current or graduate students via Skype or phone, following the same semi-structured interview methodology and reaching an additional 20 key informants. All of the informants had been involved in the Haiyan response at some point in the first or second phase.

The researchers complemented the semi-structured interviews with an online questionnaire sent to the same 24 students and graduates who took part in the interviews.

The research team decided it would not be relevant to conduct a comparative analysis between 360 degrees assessment carried out during the course and in the Haiyan context. It was agreed that the difference of environment and teams would not be comparable. However, it was used to analyse the leadership skills the key informants demonstrated during their deployment and inform the overall research.

Internal reports and open source data related to the Haiyan response were reviewed to complement the analysis of the impact of the course on the leadership behaviours of the students and graduates.

7 Findings and analysis

7.1 Overall findings of the course

Link between theory and practice/online- intensive

The course is designed specifically to link theory and practice in relation to leadership in the humanitarian sector. While there is a carefully modulated integration of theory and practice across the course, there is a perceived emphasis on theory in the cloud-based units compared with the intensive located learning units. For one informant the integration of strong theoretical understanding, linked with supported practice contexts enabled them to more successfully deal with some of the challenges they faced in the response,

“One good thing from HLP is that it provided a lot of theoretical background about how we coordinate and what are the challenges. We learn case studies from other countries, which was very, very useful for me to coordinate, particularly these cluster meetings”.

Growing from manager to leader

The Haiyan response was a great opportunity for students and graduates to apply their learning. Many reflected on either their role as a leader or how they demonstrated their leadership. The difference between manager and leader was highlighted as part of the course and is most clearly identified by Hoschschild (2010) who makes the point that, managers are generally focussed on implementing existing plans and visions while leaders on the other hand create the opportunity for generating visions and direction setting. Leadership tasks tend to focus on the big picture and are more strategic in relation to external factors and implications for the organisation in a constantly changing environment. “The role of manager is to conserve and maintain the status quo, the leader’s is to challenge it” (Hoschschild 2010: 15).

One graduate with many years of first phase emergency experience explained how this learning helped them move from an operational focus to their leadership role in the Haiyan,

“It was the first time for me that we were able to put into fruition all of the things that we talked about in the HLP. I have never been in a response really and truly

where I've spent my entire day just talking to people, helping to solve problems, reassuring, making decisions rather than sitting behind a computer”.

Another graduate identified how after struggling for the first three weeks, she managed to move to the next level,

“I was definitely jumping from being very operational to being a leader to my teams and strategically planning forward to them at times; sort of being quite a leader to the whole wider group”.

What it is to be a good leader?

There is no one way to be a ‘good’ leader. Indeed an aware leader will change their leadership depending on the context, sometimes leading from the front and at other times encouraging those with greater experience or knowledge in a particular area to take the lead with their support from behind. Stengel (2009) writes about Nelson Mandela’s understanding of leadership and indicates that at times Mandela took the lead and at other times was more likely to lead from the back through a process of listening, analysing and summarising the thoughts of others in a process of melding opinion and guiding people towards action. It is about choosing which is the most applicable leadership style in the given context. The role of a ‘good’ leader is to work with other people to bring about change and transformation for the benefit of all. This style of leadership in the South African context is referred to as *Ubuntu*, being “the idea that people are empowered by other people, that we become our best selves through unselfish interaction with others” (Stengel 2009: 81). Several graduates described a ‘good’ leader as being a “likeable” person, as someone who is approachable, who cares and who can inspire his/her teams. During one of the interviews, one informant asked, “*What am I going to do to be Nelson Mandela? With him passing away recently it made me think about what is it to be Mandela. For me, he's a likeable man*”. Another graduate defined a ‘good’ leader as someone who follows “*that process of consultation that engages people in that process and makes them feel needed, wanted and valuable*”.

Relational Leadership: Soft skills

The ability to build and maintain relationships is central to ‘good’ leadership and one of the key aspects to relationship development is having good communication and, so called, ‘soft skills’. Though for many these ‘soft skills’ may well be the hardest skills to successfully

engage with. The importance of being able to build relationships with the team was mentioned in a number of the interviews with one informant observing,

“I think it's something that we need to take back, the importance of the soft skills. When we're talking about behaviours, we're talking about what it means to be a leader..., that notion of engagement, eye contact, knowing somebody's name, not just saying 'hey you', all of those sorts of things that make leadership a living thing for people. I think we can emphasise that more”.

The notion of the leader as the decision maker, referring back to the idea of the ‘heroic’ leader as the pinnacle of leadership is not usually applicable to the humanitarian leadership context. The idea of single person leadership in the humanitarian sector is rightly challenged by Knox Clarke (2014) who makes the point that in the vast majority of instances it is empowered, team leadership in which the designated leader is one of many involved in the process. He claims that this is the most common and arguably successful form of leadership in the sector. This form of leadership entails relationship building and maintenance, and as one informant commented;

“You assume that it's things like because you made some brave decisions and... you're always on top of everything. You assume it's those things but it's not actually. It's more about how you make individuals feel and that's the softer stuff... and I think we miss a trick because we assume it's about delivery, it's about getting through tasks, it's about demonstrating numbers. Yes it's all of those things, of course it is. But they are secondary actually. They come if you get that other stuff right”.

Stepping back: the balcony view

The course is built around developing reflective leaders who can look beyond the day-to-day operational processes of a response and take a more strategic perspective. Being able to see the bigger picture is an essential part of developing a more strategic approach for a leader. It is intensely difficult to gain a big picture view if a leader is constantly focussed on the ‘doing’. One method used in the course is to get students to step out of the team and to observe what is happening in the simulations and get what is referred to as a ‘balcony view’. This is a structured process in the course but it is designed to assist students in realising the benefit of making the time to step back and take in the bigger picture so they can be more strategic in their thinking.

Translating this action in a simulation to an actual response is not necessarily an easy thing to achieve however all informants indicated that they tried to implement the process in some form as they found it to be a very valuable tool for developing their strategic

leadership. Each informant seemed to have a different way of approaching the task and for some it was about stepping back from the team and making time and mental space to reflect. As one informant indicated,

“Every day when I get back to the hotel I sit down for half an hour and think actually of what has to be done next, how have things been going? Do some follow up reading. I use that time to really try and get the big picture together because that is needed to put everybody in the right direction”.

Other graduates took a different approach and integrated their reflection time with other members of their team and made it more of a ritual,

“One thing we definitely did during our mission on the first three weeks, our total team sat down every night at 7pm to have a where are we at? How are we going? What do we need from each other? And what do we need for ourselves? And it was that kind of daily enforced briefing, and really enforced briefing... we tried to do it in the simulation in the fourth unit, but I don't think it was really enforced and I didn't fully and necessarily appreciate how important it was until we started doing it”.

Taking the time and making the space for reflection is not a one-size-fits-all situation and it will inevitably depend on the context and the leader involved. The one thing that was stressed by all informants was the value it made to the development of their strategic leadership ability.

The role of feedback mechanisms

The majority of interviewees mentioned the importance of providing and, more importantly, receiving feedback as part of their learning and development of self-awareness. As one informant indicated,

“This is what I needed. I think you kind of get used to sitting there and not saying anything and having someone give you considered feedback, and I like that. We don't do that at other times, so again I think that's something that I would strongly recommend as something to continue and I know you are doing that”.

During the course, students learn to give feedback to their peers and team members in many different contexts but this is most strongly explored in the debriefing of the simulations. Students receive honest and constructive feedback from their coaches and peers on their performances during the simulations and helped them work on their limitations and improve their performances as leaders. For one informant it was this,

“That made me really consider my communication and my role as a leader and how I communicate that, how I stand my ground as a leader or a manager. How I listen to people. So I think that giving feedback - we had to do a lot on HLP - I think that helped”.

For a leader to ask for feedback from his or her team during an emergency is not always an easy thing to do. However it has proven to be very beneficial for some of the interviewees to practice in a real situation. It can be an enlightening experience when it is encouraged as indicated by one informant.

“One of the things I really got a lot of feedback on was that people really appreciated [my] calmness. That voices were never raised, we didn't argue, we had a lot of discussions and a lot of quite heated discussions, but nobody kind of threw their books on the ground and stormed out of the room. I think quite a few people said that they really appreciated that style of leadership and that no matter how tired we are, let's always have a laugh”.

Relevance of simulations

Simulations are ideal settings for students to apply their learning in ‘close to reality’ contexts. From unit 2 onwards, students take part in simulations, applying the learning of each unit. One key element of the simulations is that they provide a supported, learning focussed context to allow students to put into practice their learning and try new approaches or behaviours, which they might not have the opportunity or confidence to try in the real world. For one informant the opportunity to practice in a simulation was an important part of the learning process,

“I certainly learnt a lot from the simulations. I think you practice, you make mistakes, and I think that's always a good opportunity to sort of test yourself and push yourself a little further”.

The simulation in unit 4 is the most comprehensive one and builds on the learning of the entire course. It is in this simulation that students are most challenged and have the opportunity to demonstrate the leadership behaviours in an extended simulation setting. Many students find the final simulation one of the key learning opportunities of the course as indicated in this comment,

“One of the things I think is just really, really important from that GCHL/HLP, is the understanding that you get from when you're in Indonesia... of that whole forming, storming, norming, performing”.

Another informant who indicated that it is the final simulation that, for them, most clearly embeds the learning from the whole course reinforces this understanding.

“We did do a lot of work the eight months or so on the HLP. I think especially when we were in Indonesia, it does ingrain that in the back of your mind, as to what you’re thinking when you’re going through key decisions”.

Self-awareness and self-confidence

Respondents highlighted the importance of self-awareness developed through the course. The teaching team places an emphasis on ensuring a constant self-awareness process through all four units. This is done through using multiple techniques both online and during the intensives. The assessment items in the online modules are designed to assist students to reflect on their theoretical approaches and challenge the environment they work in. They also receive thorough feedback on assignments to enable them to further this process. During the intensives, the use of different tools has proven to be extremely efficient; the combination of the Hogan Psychometric test, the 360 degree assessments and the comprehensive feedback sessions are key to the success of growing students’ self awareness:

“The other thing, in terms of my perspective of the course, since having done this deployment, is... the amount of reflection that’s done through the course and particularly being aware of how you’re perceived by other people”.

Another outcome stated by interviewees is the confidence they’ve gained over the course of the eight months of learning and reflection. This is in direct relation with how they managed to come to have a better knowledge of who they are as a person, to receive feedback that helped them work on key behaviours and find ways to mitigate identified limitations. They then entered the Haiyan response with a different mind set and found they were capable of exhibiting great confidence in the way they were leading their teams.

“I think that in the last couple of years with the help of the HLP... there has been a massive shift in my thinking. I think it’s about confidence. It’s getting to know yourself. I think early on in your career you spend a lot of time trying to find a role model who you can relate to and you can see being a success and you can feel comfortable to think ‘yes I could be like that’. Well now I am like that. That’s me. That’s what I stand for. That hasn’t happened until now I think”.

7.2 Findings around the Leadership Behaviours

The aim of the course is to develop the leadership skills and behaviours of senior practitioners in the humanitarian sector. Integral to this are the six leadership behaviours;

Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose (CVSP), Strategic Thinking (ST), Managerial Courage (MC), Deliver Results (DR), Building High Performing Teams (BHPT) and Change and Transformation (CT). These six behaviours are all interrelated and very often, one builds on the others. During the interviews informants were asked to reflect on how they had used and demonstrated any of the six leadership behaviours and to provide specific examples from their experience in the response. As one graduate noted while reflecting on the behaviours;

“I look back at these behaviours [and] I think when you get back to doing it for real you recognise just how poignant these all are. There is nothing on that list that you don't have to demonstrate”.

Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose

James O'Toole states that one of the roles of a leader is *“to communicate clearly and repeatedly the organization's vision... all with the intent of helping every person involved understand what work needs to be done and why, and what part the individual plays in the overall effort.”* O'Toole (1999: www.josseybass.com). From the second unit of the course, students practice how to Communicate Vision and Strategic Purpose.

At high level, they should be able to:

1. Communicate a compelling and inspired vision and sense of core purpose
2. Tailor communication styles to various audiences
3. Convey complex issues with clarity, brevity and confidence and
4. Show optimism about the project to vision and future possibilities.

During the interviews, respondents stressed the importance of applying the Communicating Vision And Strategic Purpose leadership behaviour in the Haiyan context. This highlighted that despite the turmoil, clear communication with the field teams was crucial to build cohesion and common objectives. One respondent involved in the first phase of the response explained that,

“People need a purpose and direction to channel their energies and it is a leader's responsibility to provide that, even if they are small goals that change on a weekly basis as the context and capacity of the team builds”.

Other informants emphasized how essential it was for the managers and senior leadership to show optimism and building the confidence of staff by providing them with a sense of purpose and making them feel important. One graduate student told how he,

“Really focussed on the team. On giving direction on how that might look in broad perspective and asked the different teams to fill in those parameters so that [the team could] coordinate [their] thinking and focus... on what came next in the response”.

In emergency and stressful situations, leaders are expected to convey complex issues with clarity and ensure core messages are understood. One respondent explained how he managed to apply some of the learning from the course during the response.

“I’d seen that it [Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose] had been something that was lacking in previous responses in terms of how we can communicate that strategy all the way down to field level, and then to the people who are working with beneficiaries in the field. I actually found myself, a little by accident at first, walking into one of those speeches (to the teams) - and then I felt and realised that it worked pretty well, and connected it to one of the things I had jotted down several times in the learning journals that I wanted to improve on during my time at the HLP. That’s one of the key points where I felt I was very consciously putting something into play that I had learned and that I still had to grow in, and was able to practice”.

The need for all managers occupying a leadership position to convey complex issues with clarity, brevity and confidence was mentioned by several respondents. One example being;

“The importance of clearly communicating simplified messages... I focused on communicating 2-3 key points that are repeated over and over to all staff at different levels, helping staff to frame their work to fit into that larger strategic direction”.

Strategic Thinking

During the course, students learn that leaders can demonstrate a high level of strategic thinking by:

1. Aligning ideas and solutions to strategic imperatives
2. Evaluating the opportunities and risks to make informed strategic decisions, and
3. Putting in place, structured opportunities for others to generate alternative ideas.

Some respondents emphasized the importance of including their team members in the initial discussions and design of the response strategy, particularly following the first few weeks,

“... setting up frameworks for all staff to be able to input into this thinking. That’s a lot about process development, about setting the parameters for discussion, communicating where we need to be in a certain amount of time and then

delegating that to the respective deputies and field managers to make that happen”.

One challenge raised by multiple students and graduates was the lack of information available, especially at the onset of the emergency, and how they addressed the issue. One example of this is,

“I think particularly in Tacloban it was both difficult to influence strategic decisions but also to have appropriate decisions made because of a lack of information.”

An interesting aspect is how participants creatively managed to develop alternative measures to ensure a high level of strategic thinking and decision-making in their operation, whilst taking into consideration external factors such as Governments’ priorities and keeping the Humanitarian Values at the forefront of the intervention.

“We were constantly coming up with ideas or issues and then having to come up with solutions and I found my role a lot of the time was trying to align them with what the strategic priorities of the government were... and how do they best meet not only the humanitarian imperative but also the government priorities”.

During the interviews, many graduates reflected back on the course and how they managed to apply strategic thinking in their day-to-day work in the Haiyan context. As one informant indicated,

“I think those hours and hours of going through it and discussing it in the HLP, definitely did add value in terms of how I would then think a bit more strategically about the way I was approaching situations... Strategic Thinking is definitely something that has influenced my way of thinking in terms of management and prioritising things”.

Managerial Courage

As Martin Luther King famously said, *“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy”.*

In any humanitarian work, managerial courage is a key competency required from leaders and managers. During the course, students are trained to demonstrate high-level managerial courage. This is done in both the online units and the intensives. In the online units students are required to challenge ideas and humanitarian practice and argue their position using evidence to support their discussion. In the intensives, it is essentially through the simulations that students apply their managerial courage. When demonstrating high level of managerial courage, students are expected to:

1. State willingness to champion ideas
2. Confront difficult situations and seek resolutions
3. Take calculated risks and stand by one's decision, and
4. Make tough decision and corrective actions without delay.

Informants stressed the importance of making decisions swiftly, especially in the first few days of the response, and comments such as *“any decision's better than no decision”* were made by a number of informants. Access to data to make informed decisions was part of the challenge faced by the teams on the ground, however many respondents stated how they demonstrated their managerial courage by making decisions despite the limited information available,

“Understand that you're working in an environment where there's imperfect information but of the information that's available, to make the best decision you need to have access to all that. I think that was one of the difficulties that I found, particularly early on, was being able to gain access to all of that in order to make appropriate recommendations”.

Informants agreed that these decisions were made through a combination of common sense, experience in the sector and learning. Many expressed their confidence when making these decisions, as they were the best decisions that could be made at the time with the information available,

“One of the areas that I've been more comfortable with is around understanding in an humanitarian environment that sometimes you just have to make the decisions on the information that you've got and for better or worse you do it with what you've got”.

Students and graduates also stressed the importance of remedial measures when decisions were not appropriate and the necessity to regularly analyse what was right, what wasn't and how to address it to ensure the response would be moving in the right direction.

Another finding showed the importance for the informants to stand by their decisions despite possible opposition or questions either from colleagues or field team members. In the case of Haiyan, many staff members were encouraged to speak out and provide their perspective, whether they were national or international staff. These discussions could become challenging for the leadership when having to listen and be inclusive whilst remaining focused on the decision,

“I think one of my learning was about having the courage to stick to the decisions that you make. When you're very clear in your mind that it's the right decision and you can very clearly justify it, that's not a problem”.

An interesting point raised by a few respondents was the importance of demonstrating managerial courage in a way they are not used to in their regular work and, in many ways, being forced out of their comfort zone. Examples such as discussing with external stakeholders; or being in the field for people used to being at headquarters; or challenging their own organisation's HQ for further support were often provided,

“I had to exercise managerial courage in a lot of ways - talking to military, asking for help, can we take a ride in the C-130? Reaching out to strangers, which is really not something I do every day. Simply being out there required a lot of courage, I would say”.

Relations between field offices and response headquarters (HQ) and between response HQ and the organisation HQ can often be contentious and this is usually due to different understandings and priorities. The Haiyan response was no different from the respondents' perspective. Those based in the field explained how they had to demonstrate managerial courage by standing up to the Manila-based response HQ office to be heard and put forward their field office priorities. One graduate in a field manager position explained,

“I very much had to be a voice, as I should be, for the field office and having those meetings at a field office level, what are our challenges, what are our issues that I need to bring up, going and bringing that up with the Manila office and really fighting the field office's corner”.

Deliver Results

In a humanitarian disaster such as Haiyan, delivery of results is one of the priorities that are instinctive for relief workers. However it is often dependent on external factors such as coordination with other organisations, access, security, information and available logistics. Furthermore, internal factors such as having appropriate systems and the right people in place also impact on the delivery of results. From the course, students learn that for a leader to deliver results at a high level, it is necessary to demonstrate their capacity for:

1. Removing barriers and constraints to ensure plans are achieved
2. Actively managing risks and taking actions to reduce risks
3. Making changes to improve performances as result of information received and
4. Creating measures and metrics to track performances

Informants raised the importance of delegating and empowering team members to take initiative for the delivery of results. The importance of having a clear oversight of the situation in order to make space for corrective actions if necessary was also seen as essential. Delivery of results was very often perceived in direct relation with managerial courage,

“I needed to ensure that all of the results were being delivered on time and if they weren't then you know what was going on and how we were going to deal with that”.

Reflecting back, some informants acknowledged that either they or their colleagues were too focused on the delivery of results and therefore the communication or strategic aspects were missing and that they wished they had applied the ‘*balcony view*’ more often,

“Because I was focused on delivering results and really focused on just making things happen, I wasn't taking the time to communicate some of the challenges after the training and getting that extra support that could have really helped the response”.

Building High Performing Teams

Demonstrating the capacity to build high performing team in an emergency is not an easy task, mainly due to high turnover of staff, diverse teams and technical challenges such as communication. It necessitates strong leadership and a very high level of ‘soft skills’ as highlighted in the findings of this research. During the course, students were required to demonstrate their capacity to build high performing teams through team exercises and assignments. This was particularly the case during the simulations both online and during the intensives. Performing at high level includes:

1. Facilitating and managing interaction between team members so that they perform more highly together than they would individually
2. Create a climate of high team morale by sharing team successes, and
3. Promoting collaborative working across boundaries.

One of the main findings of this research is that leaders who set a positive tone from the onset of the response will influence the entire response, creating highly motivated and collaborative team members and inspiring staff to do the same for their own teams. One of the graduates who joined as a Deputy Team Leader explained,

“It just made me realise that if you set that tone, and it's so much about just setting the tone, in the right way, being positive, being enthusiastic, people will want to work for that. People will want to be part of that success. Remembering to be positive.”

In most of the interviews, graduates reiterated the importance of leading by example and connecting with the team members as being key factors to successfully build high performing teams. The majority of the informants recalled the importance of the daily morning meetings with celebration of achievements and successes. Graduates and students also reflected on how inspired they were when the leadership showed a very positive attitude,

“Remembering to smile. Remembering that you as a leader, how you behave, how you appear to other people, is so important and yes, your action for sure but more just your presence in the room and how you relate to people”.

Another interesting finding was the importance of including both national and international staff in discussions, building trust and giving them a sense of ownership over some of the decisions made by the leadership. In some instances, team members knew each other and the way they worked. This made a considerable difference,

“If you know people and you know how they work and you trust them and all that, it makes a big difference.”

One key skill of a successful leader, taught during the course, is the capacity to be supportive of their teams and pay specific attention to their national staff members. This involves engaging with them and regularly checking on them. One graduate explained how he would do a pulse check with his team members on a daily basis and support them as much as he possibly could by asking,

“How are you doing on the different things, and what do you need from me in terms of clearing the road or pushing through things or supporting you by bringing you resources?”

This attention and care created a high sense of belonging within the team and increased staff motivation. Another important factor mentioned by interviewees was the set-up of new offices with new team members who had no experience with specific organisations or even in the humanitarian sector. One informant described it as a great opportunity to develop high level of team spirit by empowering them,

“Ninety percent of my team had not worked in humanitarian work before so everybody was new to this. It was key to be able to involve them from the

beginning as to what we were trying to achieve, as well as to what they were trying to achieve.”

Change and Transformation

Change and Transformation is the leadership behaviour that is often thought to be the most challenging to observe and analyse according to the information provided by the informants. It is evident that as soon as a country or area experiences a disaster, change and transformation happens at many levels, from the communities affected to the national government and the organisations already present, all will inevitably be subject to rapid internal changes. For many this will mean a dramatic transformation from a development focus to a humanitarian response focus that can be very disconcerting. During the last three iterations of the course, discussions were held as to how important it is for a leader to be able to embrace change. Adair (2007: 57) makes the observation that “change throws up the need for leadership and leadership brings about change”. It is important for a leader to be able to embrace change and also, at times, to bring about transformation.

The attributes of a leader with high-level skills in this behaviour include:

1. Addresses the concerns of others over change, helping them to embrace it and demonstrating own belief and high expectations
2. Celebrates success of change both at the end and throughout the process
3. Builds the confidence of others in their own ability to embrace change
4. Effectively influences others by understanding their interests and showing how they will be met by own preferred solution

The need to embrace the understanding of almost constant change and transformation implicit in a humanitarian response, particularly early on in the first phase, is imperative for a leader. It is then the responsibility of a leader to encourage others to embrace this and it is best done right from the start. As one informant indicated,

“Start it from day one. Start sowing the seed. Start trying to help people understand what this is going to mean for them, where it's going to head, what it's going to look like. Try to get people excited about it because... change always comes with this negative connotation as opposed to a ‘wow look at the opportunities’”.

The importance of keeping everyone in the team fully informed of what is happening can play an important role in the ability of people to accommodate the change and transformation that is taking place. If people are informed it is more likely they will have

enhanced buy-in to the process and be better able to accommodate the change. Within a team and more broadly across an organisation, *“it's very important that everybody is fully informed of what is coming their way”*.

Another role that a leader can play in the process of change and transformation is to make sure that there are competent people in strategic positions that can act as focal points during the transition. One informant made the point that it was important to provide anchors within teams through managers in times of change and transformation indicating,

“That providing anchors for these strategic issues, with your reliable competent managers in key positions, so that you can go through the change despite all these transitions and everything, somebody is consistent there, and somebody will help you unload the history. Somebody will know what are the needs that need to be prioritised.”

7.3 Additional findings post Haiyan Response – online survey

Key successes of the course

Some of the key successes of the course were documented in the online survey post Haiyan Response. The following were listed as key successes of the GCHL course:

- Increasing students' willingness to continue developing skills in critical reflective practice.
- Enhancing self-awareness about students' strengths and weaknesses. The majority of interviewees mentioned the importance of consistent feedback, coaching and mentoring in the course.
- Bringing together a wide range of students from across countries and organisations, with various expertise.
- Promoting team work and peer learning.
- Scaffolding of the units up to the final simulation where students must demonstrate the application of their learning of the entire course.
- Providing a better understanding of the humanitarian sector from an academic perspective, its strengths and limitations.

- Demonstrating the practical application of skills by allowing students to take risks in a safe environment.
- Realistic simulations. As one student remarked, “The build up to the simulation and the conditions of the exercise are an excellent environment to implement learning and test capabilities”

Valuable lessons students have taken from the course

Informants’ responses may be summarised accordingly -

- An increased capacity to deal with pressure and handle difficult situations.
- Being aware of the need to make decisions quickly or when more time and consultation with colleagues is needed.
- That the theoretical part of the GCHL/HLP was critical in understanding the context and rationale behind humanitarian work.

This is evident in the following comments made by informants -

“The most valuable lessons I took from the course were in being more aware of my leadership style and what worked well naturally and what I needed to work on”.

“Having a theoretical knowledge of leadership behaviours helped me put in practice a stronger leadership style and how to work better as part of a team”.

“To take a step back and view the bigger picture and once you have a clear understanding of what needs to be done [to] have confidence in your decision making. However at the same time be flexible to react to new information”.

“The need to be aware of how you are perceived by others. My experience during Haiyan was that under stress people became less cognisant of how they are perceived which can be damaging”.

“The course has taught me that making a timely decision is crucial in crisis situations and therefore sometimes or most of the time a leader needs to take risky decisions and not to wait until all the information [is] available before making any decisions. Of course risks have to be calculated/managed and a leader should also be held accountable for... decisions made”.

Areas for further development

Students and graduates made some suggestions as to what could be included in the content and delivery of the course. These recommendations were immediately taken into consideration and incorporated into unit 2 which commenced in February 2014.

These suggestions included:

- The second parts of GCHL/HLP, particularly Unit 3, should incorporate more case studies.
- Additional sessions online and also on campus should focus on skills such as negotiation, coordination and external representation, crisis management and civil-military coordination.

This response to suggested areas of improvement is a considered strength of the GCHL/HLP. The evolution of the course over the last four years has incorporated much of the feedback from students and faculty. At the end of every unit and at the end of each course students are invited to provide constructive feedback about their experience in the unit or course and what they believe would strengthen the offering. The faculty also meet at the end of each intensive and spend a day reviewing the course and identifying where the programme could be improved. This continual critical appraisal has enabled the course to remain at the leading edge of change in the sector that makes the course that much more appealing to potential students and sponsoring organisations.

One of the areas for further development identified in this process, raised particularly by faculty that have joined from the University of Indonesia, the University of Nairobi and Action Contre la Faim (ACF), is the opportunity to expand the course into different contexts. The pedagogy of the course has been recognised by these representatives as cutting edge. They expressed a good deal of excitement about the possible opportunities if the resources could be found to support the development of the course in conjunction with new and existing partners in Indonesia, Kenya and a combination of France and African francophone states. This is expanded on in the conclusion of the report.

7.4 Additional findings post Haiyan Response – 360 degree reports

As acknowledged above it was not possible or advisable to compare the reports generated for this research with those done for the students in the course. The contexts of both were so vastly different to make any comparison meaningless. The reports did provide some very interesting data that provided another insight into the leadership behaviours exhibited by

the informants during the Haiyan response. Twelve reports were sufficiently completed to provide data for the research. This is not enough to be significant or to be able to make generalised findings however there were some interesting trends evident.

Probably the most noteworthy aspect of the reports was the significant number of graduates and students who consistently under rated themselves across the behaviours than their line manager, internal peers, external peers and direct reports. Over sixty per cent of self reports rated themselves lower on three or more behaviours with over 40 per cent rating themselves lower across the whole six behaviours. While this may be an indicator of the personalities of the individuals concerned, it also indicates that one of the potential qualities of a 'good' leader may be humility. Indeed the relational, team focussed nature of most humanitarian leadership contexts (Hochschild 2010; Knox Clarke 2014) would tend to indicate that a certain amount of humility would be necessary to build and maintain the relationships required to work in such contexts. This would also mesh with the importance of 'soft skills' identified by participants in the research and would be an essential behaviour in Building High Performing Teams and in being open to listening to and valuing the ideas of other team members. Neither is this counter intuitive to the behaviour of Managerial Courage. Indeed, it is arguably indicative of a greater level of critical self awareness which is another strongly identified learning derived from the course by many participants.

8 Conclusion

This research was undertaken as part of a process to understand the effectiveness of the GCHL/HLP in meeting the needs of leaders and leadership teams in the humanitarian sector. Over the last five years there has been an increasing focus on leadership with much of the literature providing a comprehensive critical analysis of the perceived strengths and limitations of leadership practice in the sector.

The GCHL/HLP has been created and developed through a partnership between humanitarian agencies (with Save the Children Australia taking the lead) and Deakin University. The course has evolved over the last three years to become recognised as the leading course of its type in the Asia Pacific region and arguably the world.

The course provides comprehensive and innovative education in leadership behaviours, combined with strong critical analysis of the strengths and limitations of the sector. This is honed through the effective use of various assessments including virtual and live simulations

prepares students and graduates more thoroughly for dealing with the leadership challenges they encounter.

The course has been designed to build the leadership capacity of the humanitarian sector in order to improve the overall management in complex humanitarian responses. The Typhoon Haiyan response that commenced in November 2013 provided an ideal setting to undertake research into how graduates and current students were able to apply their learning in a large disaster response.

The findings from the research clearly indicate that the GCHL/HLP has made a significant difference to the leadership capacity of the graduates and students involved in the Haiyan response. Informants consistently reported increased confidence in their leadership capabilities in the key leadership behaviours emphasised in the GCHL/HLP:

- Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose
- Strategic Thinking
- Managerial Courage
- Deliver Results
- Building High Performing Teams
- Change and Transformation

The research also identifies that an important aspect of effective leadership is the communication and relationship building that provides the glue that bonds team members and engages them in the process more fully. Recognising that leadership in the humanitarian sector is primarily focussed on teams rather than the individual, relationship building becomes critical.

Graduates and students have articulated the value of the learning from the eight month-long course and how this has improved their leadership skills and influenced their understanding of what it means to be an effective leader in a humanitarian response. This research is focussed on the applied learning in a response however the value of the course will be felt way beyond any individual response. The effectiveness of 'good' leadership in humanitarian organisations will compound the benefits experienced in the sector. Given that leadership capacity is not just about how someone responds in a crisis situation but affects the day-to-day working of organisations, having confident, aware and reflective leaders can only benefit the humanitarian sector as a whole. While this research has

focussed primarily on the perceptions of the individuals involved, further research would add to the knowledge of the impact of the GCHL/HLP on humanitarian organisations per se.

The findings from this research support the effectiveness of the current programme. It is planned to expand the delivery of the course through partnerships with other educational institutions. Discussions are currently underway with the University of Indonesia, University of Nairobi and the Asia Institute of Management in Manila. It is also planned to have the course available to be taught in Bahasa Indonesia and other languages as part of this process. A wider reach can only benefit the sector as a whole.

“A final comment is really just how valuable ... the HLP has been to help [me] shift from one to the other because it's hard to know what it [leadership] looks like and what it feels like... I don't think I would have got there without it [GCHL/HLP] as quickly because it just helps to process it. It helps to make sense of it. It helps to give you a sense of what - because people talk about leadership, great leaders but it's very hard if you want to be that or you think you could be that, to understand what you need to do next. How you make that shift from just being about delivering tasks to actually about doing something completely different.”

GCHL/HLP Graduate Student – Manila, January 2014

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Annex: Leadership behaviours

High Level and Adding Value

Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose	Strategic Thinking	Managerial Courage	Deliver Results	Building High Performing Teams	Change & Transformation
High Level					
Communicates a compelling, inspired vision and sense of core purpose	Aligns ideas and solutions to strategic imperatives	States willingness to champion ideas	Removes barriers and constraints to ensure that plans are achieved	Facilitates and manages interaction between team members so that they perform more highly together than they would as individuals.	Addresses the concerns of others over change, helping them to embrace it and demonstrating own belief and high expectations
Tailors communication style to various audiences, using analogies, humour, gestures etc. to promote the core message	Evaluates the opportunities and risks of each idea and solution to make informed strategic decisions	Prepared to take calculated risks and stand by decisions despite resistance	Actively manages risk and takes action to reduce risk	Creates climate of high team morale by sharing team successes	Celebrates success of change both at the end and throughout the process
Conveys complex issues with clarity, brevity and confidence	Puts in place structured opportunities for others to generate alternative ideas	Confronts difficult situations and seeks resolution	Makes changes to improve performance as a result of information received	Promotes collaborative working across boundaries	Builds the confidence of others in their own ability to embrace change
Shows optimism about the project to vision and future possibilities, which in turn inspires others		Makes tough decisions and corrective action without delay	Creates measures and metrics to track performance		Effectively influences others by understanding their interests and showing how they will be met by own preferred solution

Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose	Strategic Thinking	Managerial Courage	Deliver Results	Building High Performing Teams	Change & Transformation
Adding Value					
Communicates clearly with logical structure	Develops at least two alternative ideas or solutions simultaneously themselves	Makes decisions when decisions are due	Plans appropriately and sets project steps	Encourages sense of belonging and team spirit by ensuring all members have the opportunity to contribute to team achievements	Able to tap into and use informal networks effectively to initiate, implement and/or embed change
Makes positive statements about the project	Can look at situations from different perspectives at the same time	Acknowledges the problems, issues and points of conflict of others	Allocates tasks and responsibilities to get the job done	Ensures that team contribution is fully realised by bringing people into the discussion	Adapts behaviour and communication style to get buy-in from others
Is generally optimistic and makes general statements to this effect	Encourages others to develop alternative solutions to a problem rather than going with the most obvious	Speaks out clearly for what they believe	Monitors plans to ensure that results are achieved on time	Generally recognises the benefit of a team approach	Presents features, benefits and advantages of ideas to persuade others of the change

Annex: Leadership behaviours (cont.)**Awareness and Limiting**

Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose	Strategic Thinking	Managerial Courage	Deliver Results	Building High Performing Teams	Change & Transformation
Awareness					
Communication is understood but impact is impaired by factors such as inadequate eye contact, low volume, high speed, distracting movements	Recognises the value of alternative ideas but does not use them to contribute to solutions	Recognises the need for strong decision making but delays when decisions or actions are clearly required	Responds to the plans or initiative of others	Actively participates in team interactions	Does not attempt to win others over to own position as part of the change process
	Understands the importance of alternative solution in achieving the 'bigger picture'	Overcomes conflict only when instigated by others	Makes own plans reactively when asked by others	Does not engage in managing the interactions of others	Expects own idea to sell itself rather than expressing the benefits for others
	Sees the strategic vision of their organisation and understands the contribution they make in achieving it		Shows an awareness of the importance of targets and measures but does not translate these into action	Does not disrupt or close down interactions	Demonstrates an awareness of change and possible implications but does not adapt behaviour to meet the change

Communicating Vision and Strategic Purpose	Strategic Thinking	Managerial Courage	Deliver Results	Building High Performing Teams	Change & Transformation
Limiting					
Communicates without clarity or structure in a way that makes the message unclear or impossible to receive	Adopts a single plan or strategy without considering alternative views or ideas.	Appears to be unclear about own responsibilities	Either sets no targets or measures or inappropriate ones	Shuts down the contributions of other team members by centralising issues around self	Shows hesitation or doubt about the future
Communicates with a lack of belief and confidence in the message, resulting in a lack of buy in from the audience	Rejects alternatives offered or valued by others	Tends to defer decisions to others rather than take responsibility themselves	Is constrained by restrictive or outmoded policies or procedures	Imposes consensus upon the group inappropriately	Continuously resists change
Is limited in their communication style e.g. uses one style or same style for all audiences	Has difficulty seeing the wider context	Resists taking tough decisions due to fear of failure	Creates bureaucracy that hinders the ability of others to take action	Attempts to maintain control by discouraging or preventing interaction between team members	Expresses own lack of belief and confidence in the team to adopt change
			Fails to deliver results by not focusing on purpose and outcomes		Is negative towards the interests and ideas of others in an attempt to promote own interest